

## **February 8, 2008 Homeless Education Update**

### **Homeless Education Community:**

This is the second Homeless Education Update this school year and I want to focus on the three primary functions of a Homeless Education Liaison: **Track, Train and Team**. The resources that the Vermont Department of Education has developed online at the Education for Homeless Children and Youth website were created to support you in all three areas and links are included so that you can quickly and easily access these tools. The website is located at: [http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm\\_homeless.html](http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_homeless.html)

**Track:** The primary responsibility of a Homeless Education Liaison is to identify and facilitate the enrollment of homeless students. The definition of homeless, found right on the front of our website, focuses on whether a student has a **fixed, regular and adequate** nighttime residence.

At the end of the school year, the DOE will request the following information:

1. The number of homeless children and youth identified and enrolled by grade level (pre-K to 12), and
2. The number of homeless children and youth who had the following as their primary night residence: shelter, hotel/motel, doubled-up, unsheltered (campground, car, etc)

Our office has developed the **Liaison Worksheet** to assist with tracking this data and to guide enrollment decisions using the McKinney Vento Law requirements: [http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm\\_homeless/toolbox/liaison\\_worksheet.pdf](http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm_homeless/toolbox/liaison_worksheet.pdf)

**Train:** You serve as the contact person for both the Department of Education and your SU/SD, so it is important that you have a working knowledge of the laws regarding services to homeless students and the responsibilities of the schools. View the McKinney Vento power point presentation as a **self tutorial** and use it to **train school staff** so that you have a network of people who can identify and refer students to you for enrollment and access to services like school meals, Title 1 services, early education and out-of-school programs.

**Take a look at the McKinney Vento power point at:**

[http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm\\_homeless/toolbox/homeless\\_education\\_0807.pdf](http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm_homeless/toolbox/homeless_education_0807.pdf)

You can use this power point along with the "**Getting It Right Flow chart**" a picture of how homeless students are identified and enrolled and the **School Referral Form**, which allows your school staff to flag a potentially homeless student using the criteria from the McKinney Vento law.

**"Getting It Right Flowchart":**

[http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm\\_homeless/toolbox/getting\\_it\\_right.pdf](http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm_homeless/toolbox/getting_it_right.pdf)

**Liaison School Referral Form:**

[http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm\\_homeless/toolbox/referral\\_form.pdf](http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm_homeless/toolbox/referral_form.pdf)

A Word version of the referral is located on the website so that you can download it and create a version that includes your name and contact information.

The state office has **Liaison notebooks** available to organize both your **referral forms and the worksheets** on each student. This allows you to easily gather data at the end of the school year for reporting purposes and documents the work of your SU/SD for monitoring purposes. Contact Lisa Champney, DOE, at 828-6574 or [lisa.champney@state.vt.us](mailto:lisa.champney@state.vt.us) to have a notebook sent to you.

**Team:** Every SU/SD in Vermont has a designated Homeless Education Liaison, so you have a network of colleagues around the state. The Liaison in the SU/SD where a student is currently living is responsible for identifying and enrolling the student. Before any commitments are made regarding transportation to school of origin, you will want to contact the Liaison from the SU/SD where the student was formerly enrolled. The list of Vermont Homeless Liaisons is kept up-to-date and is located at:

[http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm\\_homeless/contact\\_list\\_0807.pdf](http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm_homeless/contact_list_0807.pdf)

In some cases, you will need to coordinate services to homeless students with colleagues in **New Hampshire, New York or Massachusetts**. Here are the contact lists for Liaisons in these states:

Click here for a list of **New Hampshire Homeless Education Liaisons** :

<http://www.ed.state.nh.us/education/doe/organization/instruction/boip/documents/Liaisons2007-2008bydist..pdf>

Click here for a list of **New York State Homeless Education Liaisons** :

<http://www.nysteachs.org/liaisons/>

Click here for a list of **Massachusetts Homeless Education Liaisons** :

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mv/homeless.asp>

**What's New**

- Ever wonder how many children and families are homeless in your area? **The Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness** website includes information **by county** on the number of homeless families and children. One day each year the state's network of homeless shelters and service providers, and scores of community partners, conduct a **Point in Time** count of everyone who is homeless. A sample report with Rutland county data is located at:  
[http://www.helpingtohouse.org/documents/point\\_in\\_time/rutland.pdf](http://www.helpingtohouse.org/documents/point_in_time/rutland.pdf)

You can click into your county report by going to the Coalition website at:

<http://www.helpingtohouse.org/profile.php> Go to the **Point In Time Survey** section.

Franklin and Grand Isle counties are combined into one report, as are Essex and Orleans counties.

- Did you know that children represent as many as one-third of the homeless in Vermont? **Voices for Vermont's Children (formerly the Vermont Children's Forum)** has produced an issue brief called "**Homeless in Vermont: Children, Youth and Families**". The report includes information on children's education, and specifically mentions the work of Homeless Education Liaisons in Vermont schools. Take a look at the issue brief on homeless children at:  
<http://www.voicesforvermontschildren.org/>
- Dorigen Keeney, MS RD, from The Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger has sent this message to Homeless Education Liaisons:

Dear Homeless Liaisons:

Thank you for all your work on behalf of homeless students. In November 2007, we sent the posters and brochures informing students of the definition of homelessness and of their educational benefits to school food service directors. These were the same posters and brochures we asked you to distribute the year before. If you have questions or would like more of these posters or brochures, please contact Dorigen Keeney, Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger, [dkeeney@vtnohunger.org](mailto:dkeeney@vtnohunger.org) or 802-865-0255."

- **The BEAM** is the newsletter of the **National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth**. The fall issue included articles on **verifying homeless eligibility** (p.7) and the role of Liaisons in supporting homeless students in **accessing higher education** (p.4). You can click into this issue of The BEAM at:  
[http://www.naehcy.org/dl/beam/fall\\_07.pdf](http://www.naehcy.org/dl/beam/fall_07.pdf)
- **Sara Denny, Homeless Education Liaison from Franklin Central Supervisory Union**, asks: "Is there ever a situation in which, once homelessness is established, a school of origin or current school district could legitimately refuse to share transportation costs? And if they do refuse, what recourse does a Homeless Liaison have?"

**DOE response:** The requirement to provide transportation is requirement of the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as amended under No Child Left Behind. The McKinney Vento law summary, which is included in the red information packet and is online at:  
[http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm\\_homeless/resources/key\\_provisions\\_summary.pdf](http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm_homeless/resources/key_provisions_summary.pdf)

The summary addresses the transportation requirement on page 3. Specifically, the law requires that transportation to the school of origin be provided to homeless students and that payment of transportation costs can be negotiated between SUs. The default arrangement is that both SUs share the expense equally.

Once a student is permanently housed, the law does not require payment of transportation costs although the student has the right to continue to attend the school where they are

enrolled until the end of the academic year. But many schools continue to support transportation costs to keep a student in place during that academic year. Once a student is not homeless, Title 1 funds may be used to pay for transportation expenses.

Once a student is identified as homeless, best practice would dictate that you contact the Homeless Liaison in the SU where the student was formerly enrolled so that a commitment to transportation costs is made jointly. If there are continuing questions, **Vermont Homeless Children and Youth Project** staff can help to facilitate an agreement. You can find the VHCYP staff person for your region at:  
[http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm\\_homeless/homeless\\_brochure.pdf](http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm_homeless/homeless_brochure.pdf)